

Summary of Montessori Research

A longitudinal study of the Montessori experience of students in the Milwaukee Public Schools (2004) associates a Montessori education and superior performance on the math and science scales of the ACT and WKCE (a Wisconsin version of the nationally normed Terra Nova test).

"In essence, attending a Montessori program from the approximate ages of three to eleven predicts significantly higher mathematics and science standardized test scores in high school." These results were found 5-7 years after the students had exited the Montessori programs and enrolled in traditional public schools. "This study supports the hypothesis that Montessori education has a positive long-term impact. Additionally, it provides an affirmative answer to questions about whether Montessori students will be successful in traditional schools."



In a recent (2006) study using a "lottery loser" design to provide a control for parental influence, Montessori 12-year-olds from a public, inner city school, were tested for their cognitive, social, and behavioral skills. The authors of the study found, among other things, that these students

- wrote essays to a prompt that were rated as significantly more creative and as using significantly more sophisticated sentence structures (than students of the control group);
- selected more positive, assertive responses to social dilemmas; and
- reported feeling more of a sense of community at their school.

Based on these and other results, the researchers concluded: "when strictly implemented, Montessori education fosters social and academic skills that are equal or superior to those fostered by a pool of other types of schools."



One well-known, older study (1989) asked public middle school teachers to rate randomly chosen incoming Montessori students in a number of important areas in comparison to their peers. "The [Montessori] sample ranked highest on 5 characteristics: using basic skills, being responsible, showing enthusiasm for class topics, being individualistic, and exhibiting multicultural awareness."



The full texts of these and other research studies can be found at

<http://www.montessori-ami.org/research/research.htm>

<http://www.montessori-namta.org/Namta/geninfo/rschsum.html>

Also, an excellent summary of current research that supports the basic theories and practices of Montessori education is Dr. Angeline Lillard's *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* (2007).